

1 Corinthians 11

This chapter divides easily into 2 sections: vv. 2-16, and vv. 17-34. Verse 1 associates with chapter 10. They are to imitate him in not seeking their own profit, just as much as Paul followed Christ in this regard.

Christ is prominently brought before us in verse 1 and verse 3. If we have Him before our minds, obedience to His word is made easier.

The main teaching of the first section of ch. 11 is **headship and its display in assembly meetings.**

Ch.11 brings before us five external symbols of the Christian faith:

- 1) the uncovered head of the man when the assembly is meeting;
- 2) the covered head of the woman;
- 3) the Lord's (lordly) supper; (character, not possession)
- 4) the bread; and
- 5) the cup.

Two others associated with the church are:

- 6) baptism, and
- 7) the first day of the week (the day of the Lord's resurrection).

2: brings praise , before the rebuke of v.17. Their remembrance of him and his teaching; they keep the traditions: the traditions are the teachings of the apostles, have apostolic authority. This authority died with the apostles.....they had been with Christ from the beginning (Acts 1:21,22; 1 Cor. 15:7,8).....Paul's teaching was inspired by the Holy Spirit and was equivalent to the WoG (2:16; 7:40; 2:6-10; 2-13:3; 11:23) These traditions were "delivered" (11:23; 15:3) to them, as if Paul was carrying an important message that needed to be safeguarded.

3: headship is introduced; the divine chain of command, as it were: God-Christ-man-woman. Headship implies direction - our head directs our body; and authority. God is head of Christ inasmuch as Christ has taken His place in the creation. Isaiah 40:1 "Behold my Servant....." The name "Christ" implies His place as the Anointed One. He is head over man. "The headship of God over Christ is not about His place in the Godhead, it is about the place He has taken in creation." (H Smith).

(Two other headships of Christ: Head over all things. Eph. 1: 22; Head of the body, the church. Col. 1:18.)

The display of headship in church meetings is the covered head of the woman and the uncovered head of the man. "Covered" here refers to having something "down upon the head", such as a hat or similar covering.

There are **at least 8 reasons** here for the head of the man being uncovered and the reverse for the woman.

1. **Honour vv.4,-6:** it is a dishonour for the man to function with covered head, and the woman to function with uncovered head. I view the prayer and prophesying here as collective; i.e., when a man prays or prophesies, the whole company is viewed as participating. (The silence of the woman is commanded in 14:34,35, and 1 Tim. 2:11,12.). In fact, if a woman be uncovered, it is the same as having her hair shorn off.
2. **Glory v.7:** the man is the image and glory of God; Image means “visible representation”; hence, fitting that this image be displayed. The man is the glory of God in that he is submissive to God, thus showing God’s greatness and majesty. The woman is the glory of the man; hence, man’s glory is covered. She is man’s glory as “she renders conspicuous man’s authority”. “The woman is man’s counterpart and complement, and in her man reaches the full manifestation of himself.” (WEVine).
3. **Origin: v.8:** woman came out of the man originally (Gen. 2:21,22). Assembly order reflects this creation order.
4. **Purpose: v.9:** the woman was created for the man, not v-v.
5. **Authority: v.10:** either an expression of her submission to authority, or her actual authority to be in the gathering. The angels are observing this, and learning God’s ways. (4:9; Eph. 3:10).
6. **Mutual Dependence: vv.11-12:** in true Christianity, we are brought back to dependence upon the Lord, and hence upon one another. In the original creation “all things are of God” v.12; in the new creation, likewise: 2 Cor. 5:17,18. Hence, all creation and these relationships originate from God and are for His glory and purposes.
7. **Common-sense Judgment: v:13:** Is it comely or fitting ?

Vv. 14-15: the lessons of nature: man’s long hair is a shame to him; woman’s long hair is a glory to her and a covering or veil, something wrapped around the head. The hair as a personal covering differs from the covering above. Vv.4.7.

8: Universal church custom: v.16: the teaching of headship and the head- covering was in all the churches. (4:17; 7:17; 14:33; 16:1).

Note on short and long hair: the main idea is the distinction of the sexes. There should not be a problem distinguishing a man from a woman by looking at the length of their hair. This has nothing to do with natural shortness, or medical conditions causing hair loss.

1 Corinthians 11:17-34. The Lord's Supper. Parkview GH 21.09.14

- I. Its Abuse. Vv. 17-22.**
- II. Its Institution and meaning. Vv. 24-26.**
- III. Warnings and Exhortations . Vv.27-34.**

From Acts 2:41,42, and Acts 20:7, we see that the Lord's supper (the breaking of bread) was the common practice of the early assemblies; and was held the first day of the week. It is always associated with an established assembly in the NT, these 3 times it is mentioned. B of B- the act of participation; Lord's supper-its dignity and character (JH). "Lord"-- 8 times in 17-34; implies Lordship, whereas 1-16 implies headship.

I. Its Abuse.

Vv. 17-22. Paul could not commend their practice w.r.t. the Lord's supper. It appears they came together to eat a meal, and partook of the Lord's supper at the end of the meal. But, their coming together was for the worse: it caused divisions in the assembly, which formed sects within the assembly. Some went hungry; others were drunk. It appeared to be a rich/poor divide.

Schism: a difference of opinion, thought and feeling existing within the assembly.

Heresy: a sect, or party, formed to follow a chosen teacher or to maintain a particular opinion. (H Smith)

These practices sifted the believers, so that the approved (those tried and having stood the test-dokimos) were made manifest. (These feasts were common in the early assemblies, but not prescribed by the apostles. Jude 12; 2 Pet. 2:13.).

Note repetition of "when you come together": 17,18, 20, 33, 34. Assembly unity is important. See John 17.

No praise from Paul for their actions.

II. Its Institution.

v.23, 24. It appears Paul received directly from the Lord the teaching about the Lord's supper. He had delivered this to them before; they had misused the information. It was "while He was being betrayed" (Judas not there) that He instituted it. He took bread, gave thanks for it, and broke it, and gave to His disciples to eat. It was a symbol of His body, given for them. His body was still intact; the bread was not changed into His flesh. Confusion has reigned on this point, probably due to a misunderstanding of John 6:48-58. The real meaning of these words is spiritual. V.63

V.25. The cup, emblematic of His blood; which established a new covenant. (Jer. 31:31-34; Hebrews 9:14,ff; 10:14, ff. We are the beneficiaries, but not the partakers, of the new covenant. Note: thanks given separately for the bread, followed by the cup. Cf also: Luke 22:19,20; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25.

"In remembrance of Me": an active calling to mind, of the Person of Christ, and therefore a recognition of His spiritual Presence. It is not, "in memory of." Cf Heb. 10:3)

V.26. “As often as you do this”: implies continual repetition, each week. The believer starts the week with a fresh active recollection of Christ and His death.

“You declare the Lord’s death”: the basis of the gospel; we declare His death in the Lord’s supper, and His resurrection by the day on which we do it. (the first day of the week, the day of His resurrection) 1 Cor 15: 1-4. His death broke every link between earth and the world. (JND)

It is “till He come” - the Lord’s supper is a link between His death and His return for the church.

III. Warnings and Exhortations.

V.27: the Lord’s supper, partaken of in an unworthy manner, or condition, see vv. 21-22, and chs. 1-10, brings judgement. V.29. “ guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” means being involved in the guilt of His death. (WE Vine). “This does not mean one is guilty of crucifying the Lord. It means one’s attitude to the emblems reflects the attitude to the One they symbolize.” (J Hunter)

v.28: “let a person examine him/herself”. “Dokimazo” - prove, test himself so that he is a right condition. Confess sins to God. 1 John 1:9; seek reconciliation with one’s brother. Matt. 5:23,24. The idea is to get right, not to stay away.

v.29: “ Not discerning the Lord’s body”: “We should realize the Lord’s body was given to put away our sins; if we go on living in sin, whilst at the same time partaking of the Lord’s supper, we are living a lie.” Wm. MacD.

v. 30. Consequences: 1. Weakness. 2. Sickness. 3. Death. Disciplinary action by God.

v.31. Self-discernment, of our actions and the state of our heart, obviates God’s judgment.

v.32. God’s judgement is His discipline, His correction; see Heb 12:5-11. Afflictions separate us from the doom of the world. (ATR)

v.33. Take your turn, Cn v.21.

v.34. If you can’t wait, eat at home. Don’t make God judge your coming together. The meal is distinguished from the Lord’s supper.

Paul planned to come to them again, and would set other things in order then.

The “Lord’s table “ (lit. table of the Lord) 1 Cor. 10:21, speaks of God’s total provision for us and includes the Lord’s supper, the Word of God, Christian fellowship, etc. The expression “table of the LORD” is also found in Malachi 1:7,12. There it speaks of the altar.

The Lord’s supper is not primarily worship, or a sacred song service, or a teaching meeting, or a prayer meeting, though some of these may come out of it.. It is a time of active recall to mind, of the Lord (“in remembrance of Me”) and His death..

“The object of the Spirit of God here is to set before us, not the efficacy of the death of Christ, but that which attaches the heart to Him in remembering His death, and the meaning of the ordinance itself. It is a dead, betrayed Christ whom we remember. The offered body was, as it were, before their eyes at this Supper. The shed blood of the Saviour claimed the affections of their heart for Him.” JND